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2. UK Society: the emerging pattern

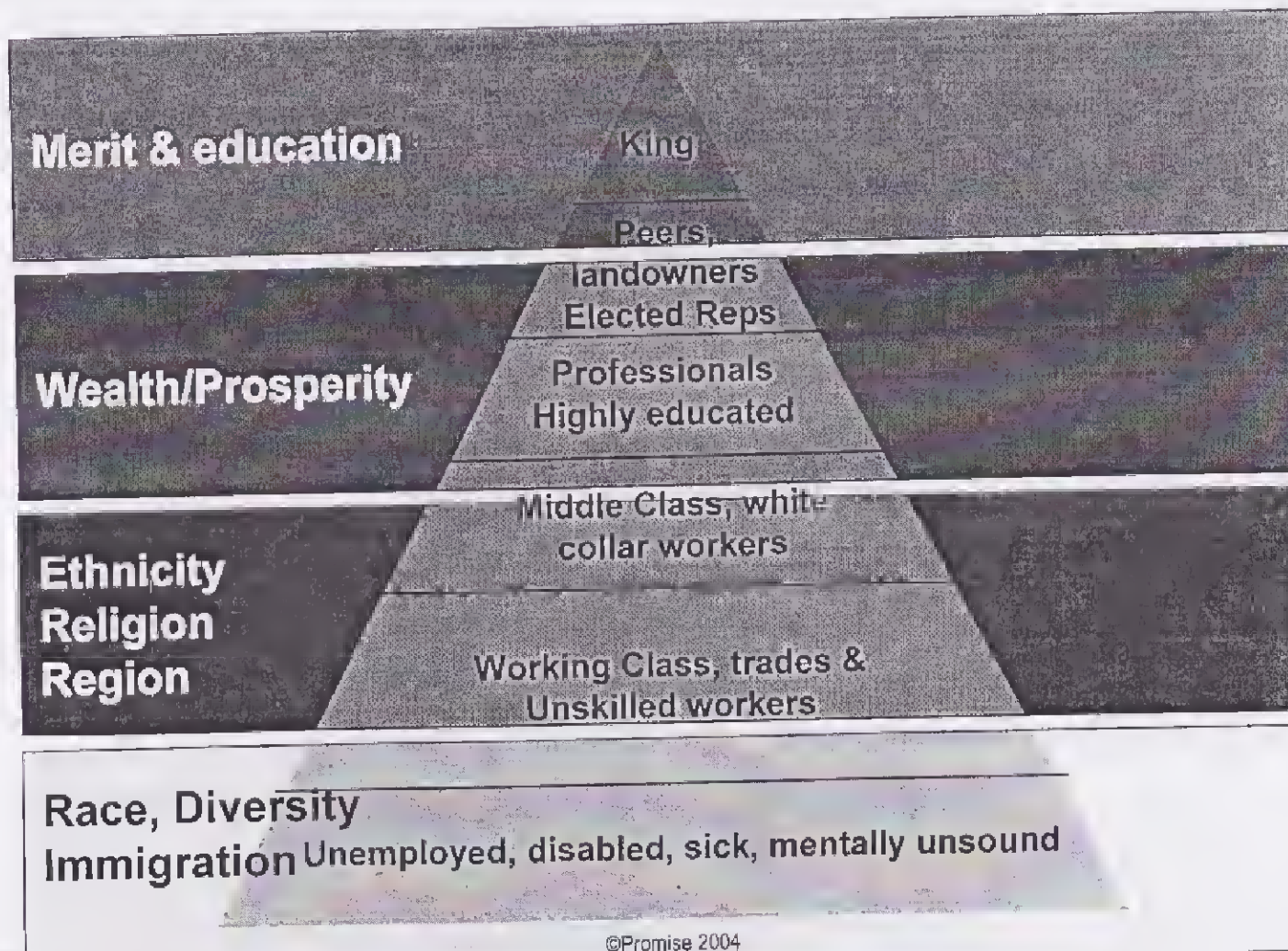
We live in a new reality

From: 'A Stratified Society Based on Birth, Rank & Privilege'



Promise

To a New Community: But where are the Boundaries?



Two Issues with Meritocracy:

"When inequality was the general rule in society, the greatest inequalities attract little attention. But when everything is more or less level, the slightest variation is noticed and becomes a source of agitation....That is the reason for the strange melancholy often haunting the inhabitants of democracies in the midst of abundance and easy circumstances."

De Tocqueville (1830)

"If the successful merited their success, it necessarily followed that the failures had to merit their failure. In a meritocratic age, justice appeared to enter into the distribution of poverty as well as wealth. Low status came to be seen as not merely regrettable but deserved."

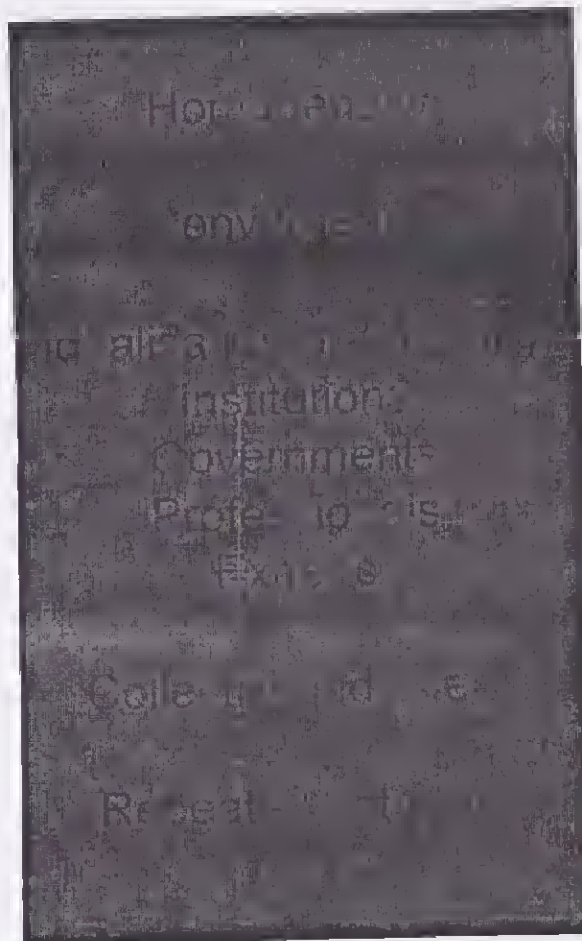
De Botton (2004)

Status Anxiety

New Trend & Developments: post Thatcher

Dependency

Autonomy



The Basis for a sense of impotency

We live in a post-Thatcher era where most of us feel that it is down to us to make life work

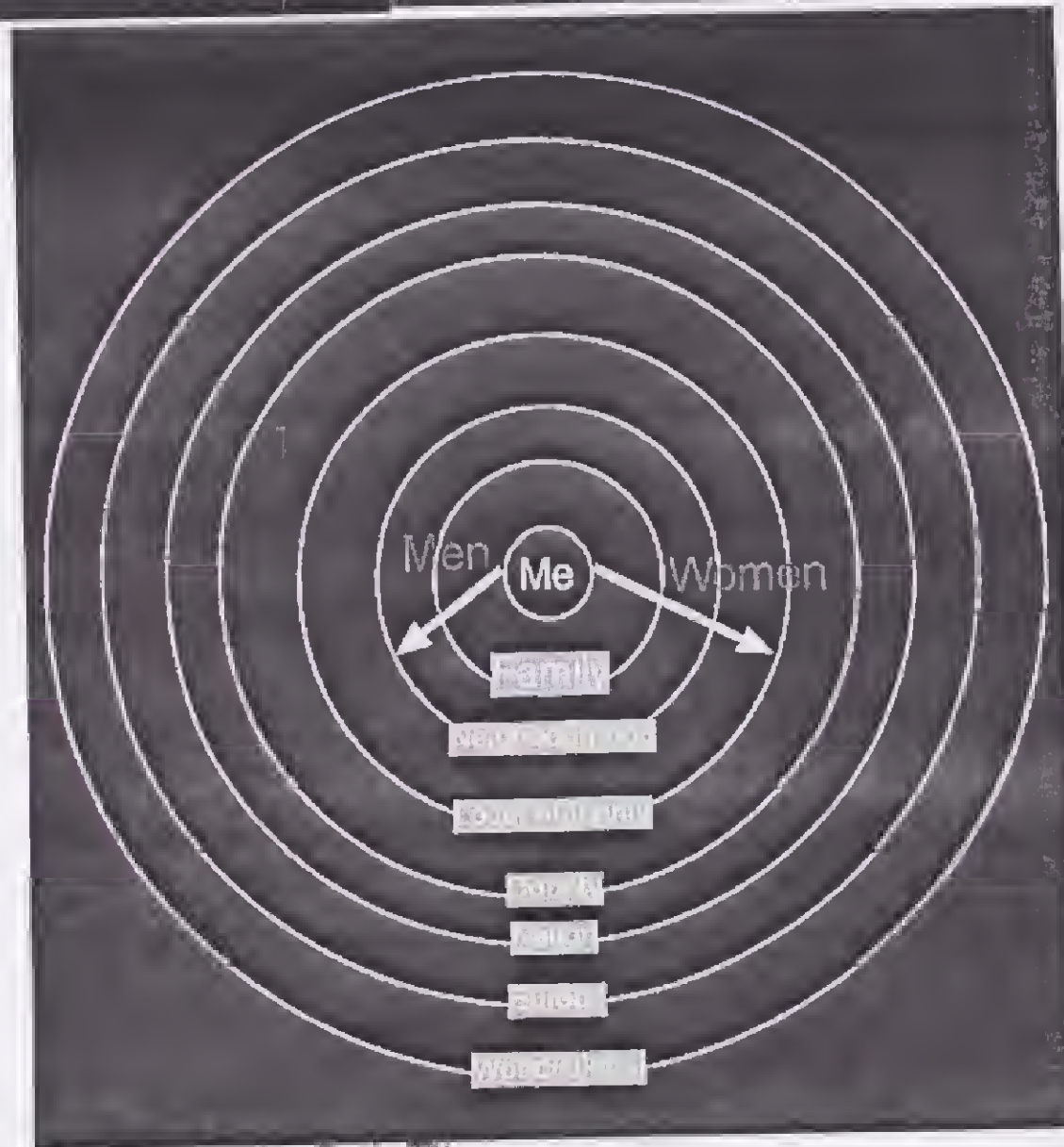
In a competitive society this leads to a sense of the survival of the fittest: we have seen another example in MG Rover this very week

Individualism

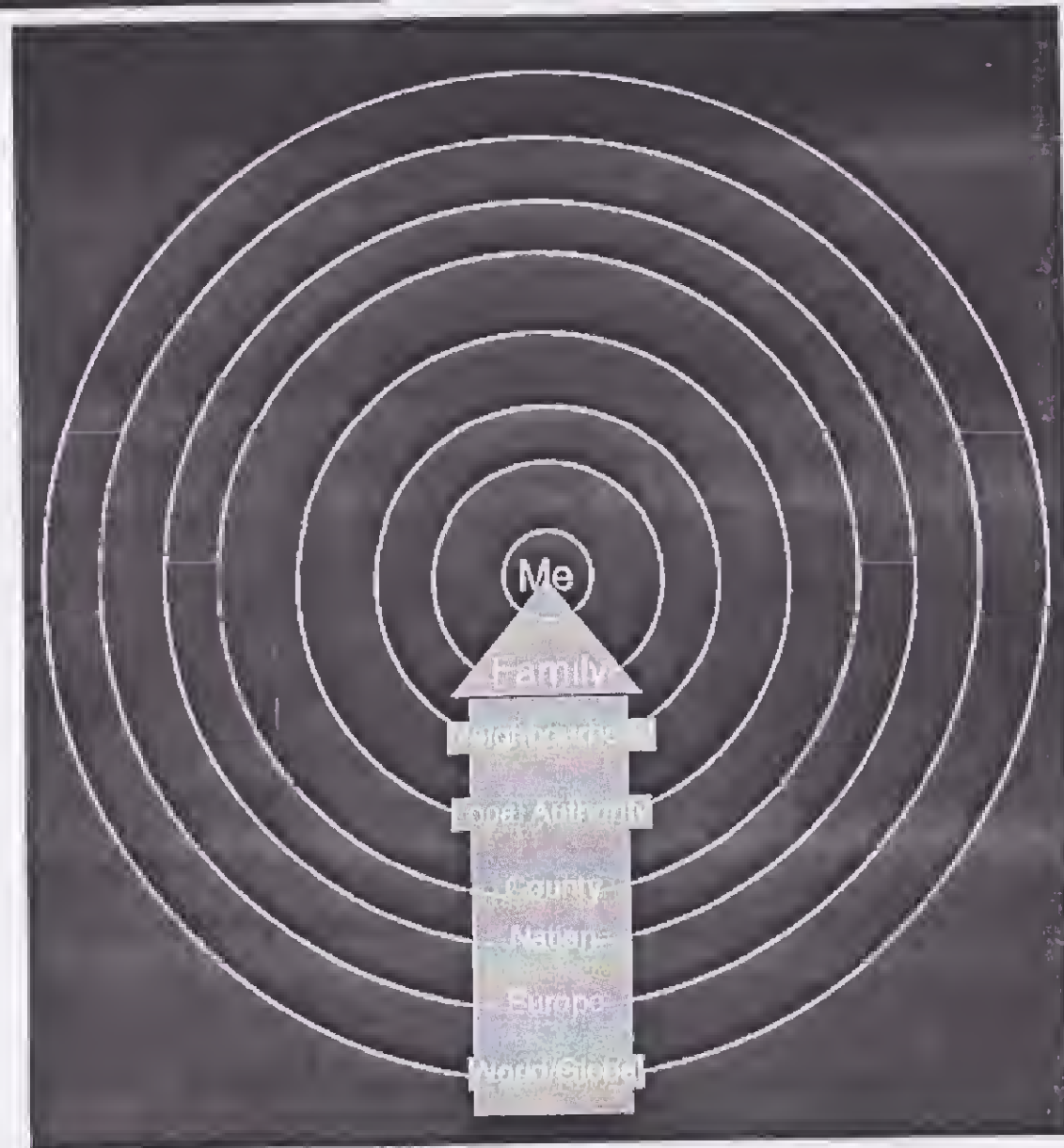
This increase in autonomy is often referred to as the rise in individualism

But people's sense of instrumentality and potency in their own community is much outweighed by their sense of growing demands:

Circle of Influence



Circle of Demands



This is compounded by

A growing knowledge through parents and the press of the likely loss of potency accompanying the 'New Longevity'

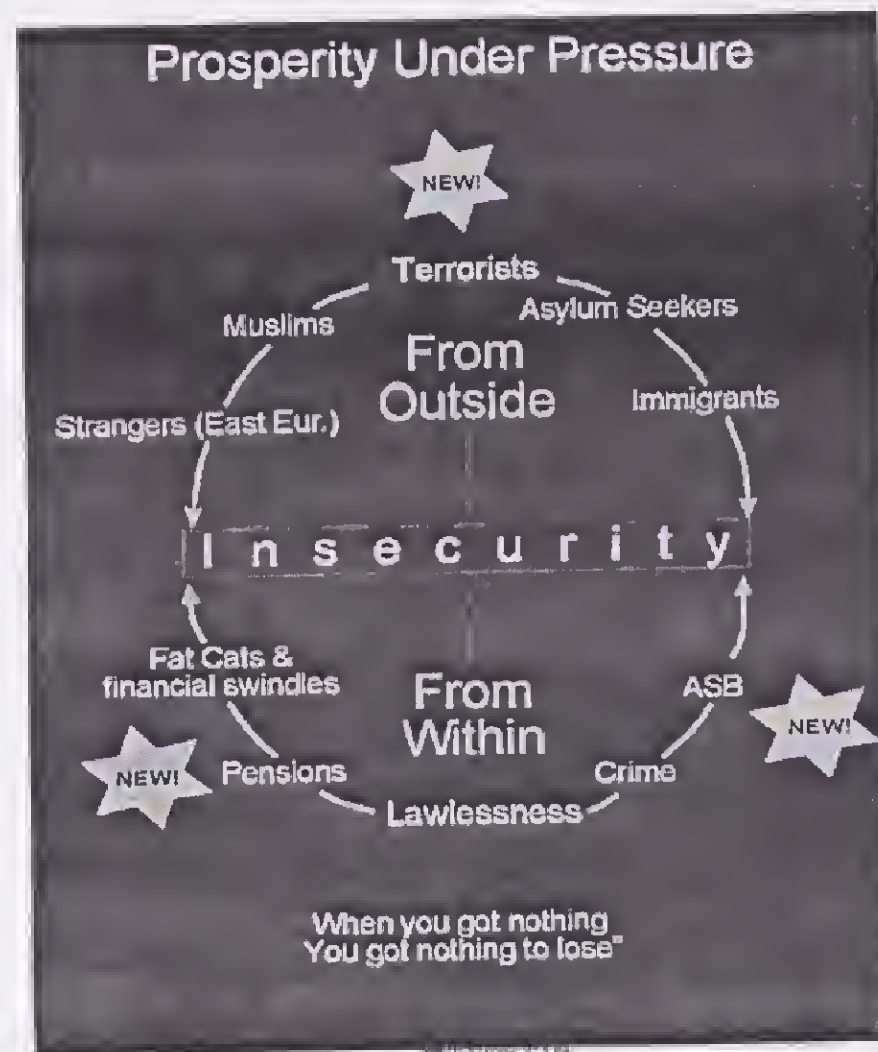
This creates a fear of losing the future

Who to Blame?

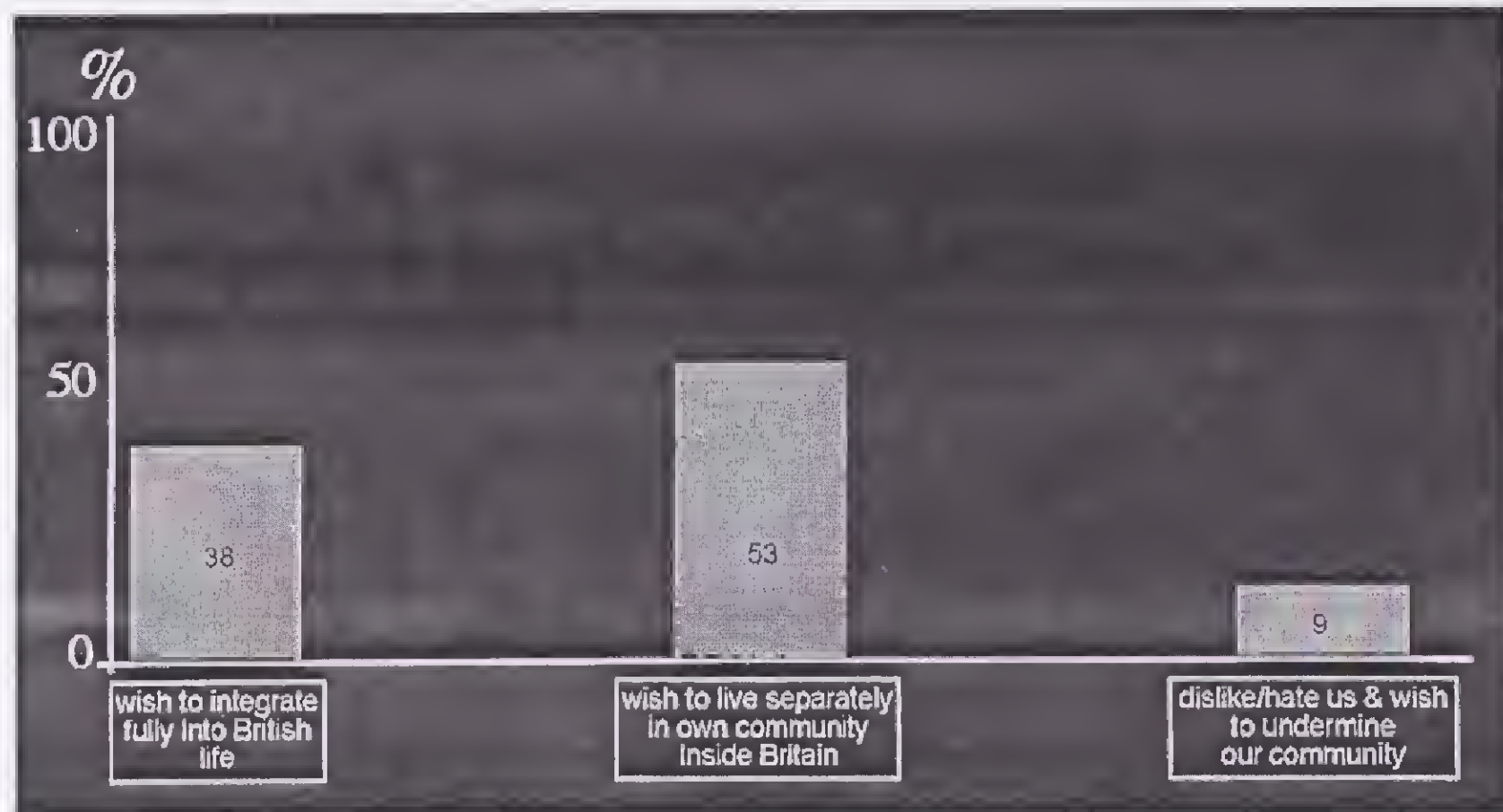
"I haven't changed, therefore some other b***** is getting what should be mine - now who could it be?"

The objectification of the unknown other

Another Trend - UK post 2001



Integration in British Life: three perspectives



Discrimination against immigrants

Is a form of bullying - very similar to Domestic Violence of which it is an example

The 'bully' feels vulnerable and powerless in the face of larger powers
- and reaches out to blame/kick someone more vulnerable than himself

To some extent all of the incumbents benefit from this objectification of the problem - culpability is relocated outside the indigenous community

Gender

Women in this small sample felt less powerless than men:

They were particularly worried about:

The competitiveness in education and not measuring up (their kids)

The pensions gap and not being able to stop working/being weak and old

How to get retrained for work once the children were grown

Solutions & Recommendations

The problem in a nutshell:

White Britons feel they are losing potency and control in their own Communities

They feel demands on them far outweigh their influence, from congestion charge to parking fines; from diverse classrooms to political correctness

There is a Commission for Racial Equality: who is looking after the interests of White Britain?